Hi, I am Dr. Mel Steely from the History Department at the University of West Georgia. Today is September 22, 1999. We're interviewing Representative Tracy Stallings about his political career. Dr. Stallings, would you tell us a little bit about your early life? Where you were born, who your family was, and that sort of thing.

I was born on December 4, 1932 in Carroll County, right here, near the city of Carrollton, but outside the city limits. A Dr. Aderhold, who was kind of a legend in his time, was the person who delivered me at my parents’ house. My father was a painter, and a paper hanger.

That little house I was born in was located in a community called Cross Plains, which is just east of Carrollton. Within the first year my folks moved into Carrollton, and we lived in the city limits of Carrollton for most of the rest of my early years.

When you were growing up that would have been, in those very early years, would have been Depression years.

Yes.

Do you remember anything at all about that period?

Well, I do. My father was a painter, and a paper hanger. Sometimes he had work, and sometimes he didn't, so we were not wealthy at all. I remember I attended College Street School, which is now where the County Courthouse Annex is located. I lived on Cedar Street, which is about two blocks from that school, walked to school every day. The school lunches at that time were ten cents. This may sound like a sad story, but some days I was able to have ... if you had just a nickel you got the meal, if you had another nickel you had a drink, an orange juice or milk. Some days I just had the ... my folks only had enough for me to have the meal. But, those were happy and we didn’t go hungry or anything.

They were interesting, and peaceful times. I can still smell the leaves. Back then you rake your leaves in the fall, and put them on the edge of the street, and set fire to them. I can still smell
the leaves burning. That was a pleasant scent at the time, it brings back good old memories when I occasionally smell that nowadays. But, it's illegal to do that now.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:02:43 Yeah.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:02:45 The schools at that time, I went from College Street School. Mrs. Dessa Henderson was the teacher there, the principal. She ran the school in a very professional manner, a very serious manner. We had excellent teachers.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:03:07 One of the memories I have of that school is that the textbooks were very plain. Nowadays I see my grandchildren's colorful textbooks, and films, and videos, and I think those are much more attractive, and easier to interest young people in than the "Dick and Jane" stuff that we had where an occasional color picture was just a big occasion.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:03:33 After that elementary school I attended high school, Carrollton High School, which was for many years up until recent decades located where now the Community Activity Center is located. I went to high school there for four years, and finished in 1950. I was in the last Georgia class that went to eleven years of high school. After I graduated it became twelve, it required twelve years of high school.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:04:07 Do you remember why they shifted, and added another year? I've heard it was so kids could play football.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:04:13 That may have been it, but I was certainly not aware enough of anything at that time to know the difference. But, I do know other states had done that, and it was a growing momentum of a thing. I played football, I was very active in high school.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:04:30 One of the interesting things is I lived probably three or four blocks at that time ... I lived on a number of streets when I was growing up. I used to kid my mother, I said, "Mother, it seems like we must've moved every time the rent came due." She didn't enjoy that joke at all. But, I did live on a number of streets in Carrollton.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:04:50 But in the high school, I remember I was so shy in the first year or two of high school that I would wait until, school started at 8:30, and I would leave home about 8:25 just in time to get there, so I wouldn't have to stand around and talk to people because I couldn't figure out what to talk about. It then occurred to me in watching things that if you were a leader
people would talk to you, and you didn't have to worry about talking to them.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: **00:05:20** So, by the time I was a senior I was president of the senior class, president of student government, and editor of the student newspaper. I overcame my shyness through the years to where that I can now mix and mingle a little bit with people.

Dr. Mel Steely: **00:05:39** It's hard to imagine you as a shy person having known you for thirty years.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: **00:05:43** Yeah.

Dr. Mel Steely: **00:05:45** Now, part of the life of a small town in those days was the church. You lived within walking distance here of both of your schools, and of your church. You were a member of First Baptist Church I believe?

Dr. Tracy Stallings: **00:05:59** That's right. I remember joining, not joining, but I started attending that church when I was about four years old according to what my mother tells me. I remember walking down the walkway with her to that church, the First Baptist Church where I'm still a member. The church of course at that time was a huge factor in your life.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: **00:06:22** As a young person I got a lot of training in the church. That's where I developed my first ability to get up in front of people and speak in what was called the Baptist Training Union. That was a valuable learning experience, as well as a spiritual exercise. So, the church was a major factor. My father died when I was eleven years old.

Dr. Mel Steely: **00:06:49** Hmm, must've been quite traumatic.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: **00:06:50** He was a painter, and a paper hanger. He died in the old clinic, which was located where Carroll Realty and Insurance Company is located now on College Street. That was a clinic. He died in that clinic on May 27, 1945 in the back corner room. I remember vividly that scene. The sun was shining, it was about 6:15 on a Sunday night. All the family was gathered in there, he had had a stroke of some sort. The minister Howard Benson, who was the pastor of First Baptist Church for thirty-something years, had just come there in the last year or two, he prayed a prayer for the family. One of the things he said at that time that affected my life forever was, he said in the prayer, he expressed appreciation for my father's contribution to society, and to humanity.
Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:07:48 Well, it never had occurred to me at that time that you needed to contribute anything to society. I was eleven years old, but I kept thinking about that. That's kind of doctored my life through the years at this point. One of the major reasons that I've been involved in all kinds of civic and religious activities to try to give back to the community something that community has been very good to me.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:08:10 Mm-hmm (affirmative). Did you have much of a social life outside of school?

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:08:18 No. As a matter of fact, it was a peaceful time, but it was kind of a barren time as far as social activities. We didn't have near the school activities that young people have now. I remember I had hobbies as a kid, and one of them was making model airplanes. This was during World War II. I made model airplanes out of balsa and tissue paper, and hung them from the ceiling in my room. We had Look magazine and Life magazine, that was about the extent of our exposure to the world.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:08:57 But, I do remember reading the Atlanta Journal, and seeing ... I got interested in airplanes at that time. That's how I ended up doing those model planes. But, we would play ball, I remember John Tanner and Ronnie Vaughn. Bootsy Dunaway, who was a famous local character who became a radio announcer on WSB in Atlanta. We'd play football in the middle of Cedar Street in the afternoons, the traffic was just so slow you could get out there. Occasionally a car would come by, and it was kind of a major event. So, it was a peaceful time.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:09:35 Well, during those war years you had all types of restrictions on driving cars and things, didn't you? People had gas restrictions, and tires, and that kind of thing.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:09:46 That's true.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:09:47 So, it wouldn't have been much traffic.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:09:48 No, it wasn't much traffic, and there weren't many places to go, you didn't travel. The society was not nearly so mobile as it is now. I remember people that worked for ... Lockheed Plant then was known as Bell Bomber. People that worked in Atlanta at Bell Bomber would load up a huge, as many as they could get, in a car to drive up there each day and commute, because there were so few cars. Most people didn't have a way to get back and forth to places.
When I was a sophomore in high school my folks moved to Mandeville, which is just this side of Bowdon Junction on Highway 27. Again, we didn't have a car at that time. Well, we had a car, but my step-father had to use it to go to work every morning. So, that left me, and my sister, and my mother without transportation to go to Carrollton to school, and to work. My mother worked down here.

So, we contracted, or hired, or paid a guy to drive us every morning to school into town. Then, in the afternoons I had football practice a lot of times, and I would leave football practice at Carrollton High School, and run over to Highway 27, and try to catch the Southeastern Motor Lines bus that left every night at seven o'clock to go north to Rome, Georgia. I would ride that bus to Mandeville to get off.

A lot of time we practiced so long that I would miss the bus. I was too shy to tell the coach I needed to leave. So, I would have to hitchhike to home, and that was no problem. I'd just walk out on Highway 27, and throw my thumb out, and usually somebody I knew would come along, and pick me up, and take me to my home.

What is Mandeville now?

Mandeville is still-

It's where the railroad crosses at the gas station?

It begins about where the railroad overpass is just this side of Bowdon Junction. That's an interesting story that some of the people in Bowdon Junction decided they wanted a city limit sign, it's not an incorporated city. So, since I've been in the legislature they wanted a city limit sign, unincorporated Bowdon Junction.

So, I arranged for that to be done. They put the signs up, but on the south side of Bowdon Junction they put the sign down there below Mandeville, to which Mandeville is adjacent. Some of my old friends in the Mandeville community just got all upset about the fact that they had been incorporated by Bowdon Junction. So, I had to get that sign moved. I said, "Now, where do y'all want the sign put?" They said, "Well, there's never been a firm definition of where the limits are, but let's give that flea market up there to Bowdon Junction. Put it just this side of the flea market." So, that's where the Bowdon Junction begins, just south of the flea market, and it goes just beyond.
Dr. Mel Steely: 00:12:52 And, Mandeville was named from the Mandeville family [crosstalk 00:12:55]?

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:12:56 There was a Mandeville Mill there for many years, it was a cotton mill. That's where the name came from. There was also a Sewell plant, the brick plant down on Highway 27 in front of that mill was a Sewell manufacturing plant, clothing plant, for many years. It's now been converted to other uses. There's a Goldkist plant along there also, it's a hatchery, I believe.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:13:19 The old mill itself is gone now isn't it?

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:13:21 Yes, the mill is gone. But, the mill stood there, it was a tin or metal building. It stood there during my high school years in that place.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:13:31 Mm-hmm (affirmative). Well now, you played football. Who was your coach back then?

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:13:36 Coach of the football team was Hugh Maddox, who at this time still lives in Carrollton. He's retired from education, he was the football coach. Ian McIntyre was the principal of the high school, and Mr. McIntyre was a famous mathematics teacher, Algebra was his specialty.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:13:55 At that time when I finished high school, as most of my cohorts did, we had taken three years of algebra. So, we came to college well versed in algebra. Mr. Mac was a great teacher. We used to talk about him hanging on to the wall, the blackboard. He would grab the top of the blackboard, and write on it. He could teach us algebra, he was really good at that. Hugh Maddox also taught in the science field.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:14:26 The high school is where I first got started in journalism. Two things happened that caused me to be interested. Back in those years you didn't have school counselors, so you just had to kind of pick and choose what you were going to study, be when you grew up, or where you went to college, or whatever. Well, I got the idea one time I wanted to be an attorney. So, on my own initiative I went downtown to Carrollton on the square to an attorney's office, Mr. Shirley Boykin was his name. I asked him about maybe becoming a ... he said, "Oh no, no. You don't want to do that. It's a terrible life." I think the problem was that attorneys at that time didn't particularly want other people growing up to be attorneys, and becoming competition. But, whatever the reason I decided well that must be a not a good life. So, I didn't become an attorney.
Anyhow, one of the things that did affect what I eventually got into was I won the county spelling contest one year. Stanley Parkman, who was the editor of the *Carroll County Georgian* at the time, now he's the publisher emeritus of the local daily newspaper. Stanley called my mother, and asked if I could come talk with him. He needed somebody that could spell to write sports. So, as a sophomore in high school I became a sportswriter on the *Carroll County Georgian*.

At that time there was a professional baseball league in this part of the state, the Georgia-Alabama League. Carrollton had a team in it known as the Carrollton Hornets. There were some famous old characters on that team, but anyhow, I covered those games. They played those games over in what is now the community activity center, the field behind it where a senior center is now situated, they played those games there.

Harvey Copeland was the owner of the team, and the general manager. Charlie Roberts was the manager of the team as I recall. They had some excellent players on there. Some of them went on to become major league players. But, I would write those games, and I’d also cover Carrollton High sports as I could, when I wasn’t playing those sports. I played football, and basketball in high school.

But, anyhow, another thing that happened in high school was I took a biology test one time, and my teacher, who was Professor Elliott, told us that he wanted us to write brief answers to the questions. I did, I wrote terse, brief answers, and made a good score on it. He said, "You know, that's pretty good." He said, "You ought to write for the paper." So, those things happened along about the same time. I did indeed end up writing for the paper, and ended up working part-time all through my school days on the Carroll County newspapers, and on in through college. Then, I came back to those papers, which is another story we will get into later on.

Did you have any time for girls in those days?

Had interest, but no time. One of the problems I had was that I was ... as I already said I was very shy. So, one of the concerns I had was I thought I didn't have proper clothing, nice enough clothes to invite a girl on a date. I didn't have any money to take her anywhere anyhow. So, I didn't do a whole lot of courting in those days.

That brings up another thing. When I was younger than that in elementary school, living on Cedar Street ... There were three
sets of families that had a boy my age, and two years under that a sister, each of us did. We'd get together on Friday nights, and go as a group of six. John Tanner, and his sister Sally. Ronnie Vaughn, and his sister Barbara, who is now married to Dr. John Burston. We would all get together, and go to downtown to Fatty Huffman's Café, and eat a hamburger, and drink a Coca-Cola, and go to the Carroll Theater, which was on the corner near there. That was a big-

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:18:49 Where was the old café located?

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:18:51 The old café was located where The Squire Shop is now located. There was a service station on the corner that A.C. Ridley owned, and then the café was right next to the service station.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:19:04 Oh, yeah. I remember that, it had a horseshoe bar, or thing.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:19:07 Yeah.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:19:08 Yeah.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:19:09 We would go there, and have that specialty. Then, still each of us had a quarter, and we still had enough to buy a bag of popcorn, and go to the movie.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:19:19 They had Duncan's old theater there?

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:19:21 Yes, it was at Duncan's theater, which he owned at the time, and owned for many years. It was kind of an institution in itself in Carrollton's history.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:19:32 Didn't they have another theater down on the square called the Arcade, or something?

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:19:37 There was a theater on the square called the Arcade for several years. Then, there was a theater down on Maple Street where the Goodyear store is now located called the Playhouse Theater. Those were both theaters.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:19:50 The most famous theater around Carrollton was the drive-in theater out Highway 27, which was across from where Danielle's Restaurant used to be. It's about five or six miles out the highway close to the Carrollton industrial park there, but it was on Highway 27. That was a popular place to date. We would take dates there, and date there.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:20:26 We'll let it go at that, huh?
Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:20:27 Yeah.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:20:28 Okay. That's a whole other world out there isn't it? You don't see much of that anymore.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:20:35 It is indeed. I was reading the other day there still may be a drive-in theater somewhere, but they are mostly gone out now.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:20:42 Yeah.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:20:42 Times have changed.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:20:44 They were still here when I came here.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:20:45 Was it.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:20:45 That particular theater was there. I came in '64, and it was still operative, on into the '70s, and it finally closed down out there. Fascinating period. Did you find that your dating life centered around your friends, people that you knew close, and also around the church?

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:21:05 Well, that's true. There was no ... Nowadays every kid has a car at age sixteen, and they do all this stuff. Of course back then that was not the case. Your social life revolved around the school, and the church, and your friends. There was just limited opportunity for much contact with other people outside a close inner circle of people.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:21:31 Well, after you graduated, so it's 1950, right?

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:21:34 Right.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:21:35 '50 was a major year for this county. If I remember doing a little research before, another program that we do on TV here. That was about the year everything shifted from having the textile mills being the big industry to the beginning of Southwire as a major industry. Do you remember anything about that?

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:22:01 Oh yes, I remember that vividly. It was along about that time that Mandeville Mills, which had been the mainstay industry in Carrollton for many, many years-

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:22:13 First half of century it dominated.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:22:14 That's right. You had the Mill Village, which was over here adjacent to the college, and Maple Street School is where most
of the people went to grade school, and other people went to College Street. There were two grade schools.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:22:28 But, Mandeville Mills was the economic part of the community for many years. It was along about that time that it just closed down. The times changed, and the demand for goods apparently was such that the mill closing ... people were thinking that that was the end of Carrollton as it was known. They thought it would just kind of dry up, and blow away, because there just weren't many jobs. I think there probably were several hundred jobs there at one time.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:22:56 But, it was also about that time, '49 or '50, that Roy Richards started his little business across town known as Southwire. And I remember, and there are pictures of the little concrete block building that he started in. He was producing wire for his other business, which was a business of building electrical wires for REA, rural electrification program, which was again just getting started along about 1932 when I was born. He was building those lines, and putting up poles, and all. He had trouble getting materials, so he just started building it himself. That eventually became a huge enterprise as it is today, and a very key segment of Carrollton, and the economy of this part of the state, and of Georgia really, because Southwire is one of the biggest privately owned companies in the state. Maybe number two or three.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:23:56 Yeah, it is a huge operation, billion dollar a day sales, and that sort of thing.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:24:01 But, also along about that time, Carrollton was seeing that if we really hustled it could get some new business, and industry, and jobs. So, we had a few key people that I think made it happen in those early years, and that made it better in the future years. Those key people were people like Bill Wiggins, and Dudley Crosson, and Woodfin Cole.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:24:26 I believe Woodfin was head of the Chamber of Commerce at the time.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:24:31 That's right. There's a company that wanted to come here, and Woodfin Cole and Bill Wiggins, and some of those people went in together, accumulated to capital it would take to build a building and entice them to come here. They did, and that was Carrollton's first big industry, the one over there on ... I'm trying to think of the name of that.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:24:58 Douglas and Lomason?
Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:24:59 Douglas and Lomason, yeah, that was the major name of the business.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:25:05 Didn't start out as that, but that's-

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:25:08 Yeah.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:25:08 Stayed there the longest at that name.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:25:11 Right. That was Carrollton's first big acquired industry. Then, we got a lot of others in the intervening years. Getting new jobs, and new businesses, and new industry became a major theme of every mayor, and every Chamber of Commerce president, and every civic club through the years. I think that's what's made Carrollton.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:25:35 Carrollton and Carroll County are among the more, probably the top ten prosperous areas in the state of Georgia economically. Event though we got problems right now I still think overall we've done real ... there are a lot of jobs in this county, and many of them are industrial type jobs, which tend to pay more than other type service jobs, or retail jobs.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:25:55 I know when I came here in '64 there was talk that Mr. Richards, who ran Southwire, was holding back on other companies coming in because competition for labor, and was fighting unions, and all of this sort of thing. What do you remember about any of that?

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:26:15 Well, you know, I've heard those stories through the years. Perhaps it was true, I don't have any way of knowing whether it was true or not. But, I do know that as far back as the early '80s, late '70s, Southwire was involved in trying to help bring industry to this community.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:26:33 I remember when Sony Music, at that time CBS Records, first came here. We had a meeting in the office of the President Townsend at the college. The key meeting at which I think the decision was really made for them to come here. Southwire's Roger Scherner at the time was present in that room along with a lot of the other civic leaders in the community, and I just never had any firsthand knowledge of Southwire, or anybody else trying to keep industry out of here. I know the stories are rife about that through the years, not only with this community but others where the main industry in a community tries to keep others out. That probably happened in some cases, but I can't speak to it here, I didn't see any of that happen.
By the time I became mayor in 1979, everybody was committed to bringing in industry and jobs. Today, you can see the fruits of that through the numerous jobs. Also, the attitudes of local industrial people are that we need to bring in more industry to balance things out. So, there's a big cooperative effort among industrialists nowadays to bring new jobs here.

Dr. Mel Steely: And you've grown in other ways too. The college has grown, which you were an integral part of that. The hospital itself, I know when I came here the hospital was just one building.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: Yeah.

Dr. Mel Steely: An old Hill-Burton hospital.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: This was the first Hill-Burton hospital in the country, as I understand.

Dr. Mel Steely: Oh, was it?

Dr. Tracy Stallings: It was indeed. It was built with the Tanner, Mr. C. M. Tanner of Tanner Grocery Company put up $75,000, and that was big, big money back in those days. The community provided some more, and they got a grant through the Hill-Burton program. So, the hospital came into being, and it's had great leadership through the years. It's now, as you well know in this year of 1999, the medical industry in Carroll County is a growth industry. We've got more than a hundred physicians, we've got a radiation treatment center, we've got two hundred and something beds at the hospital, all kinds of dentists, and other medical operations here.

Dr. Mel Steely: It is a regular medical center.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: So, we draw patients from all the surrounding counties, and from over in Alabama. I think the reason for that is that the big thrust it had at the beginning with the leadership provided by Roy Richards and Mr. Tanner, way back in those early days.

Dr. Mel Steely: I believe Roy was chairman of the committee.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: He was chairman of the committee, and he was chairman of the Hospital Authority for many, many years. I remember during the early years I was mayor, the county commission, and mayor, and city council recommend people to be put on the Hospital Authority. There was always this idea that you wanted to get the best people you could in the community, the smartest
people, the nicest people, the people with the most integrity to be on that hospital board, because it was such an important authority. That's what we tried to do.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:29:32 The college had begun, oh gosh, way back just a little after the turn of the century as an old A&M school, and had its first buildings in what, 1917? Somewhere in there.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:29:47 Right. It was a little earlier than that, it was probably 190-

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:29:52 1907?

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:29:53 '07, yes.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:29:53 Seemed like one of the buildings on the front campus-

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:29:55 Adamson Hall-

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:29:56 Yeah.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:29:56 I think was dedicated in 1907.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:29:58 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:29:58 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:30:00 And, named after Congressman Adamson.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:30:02 Right.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:30:02 Where the square, same name.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:30:03 That's correct.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:30:05 Brought in rural free delivery.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:30:06 Yes, yes.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:30:07 That was his big contribution.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:30:08 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:30:08 Bowdon I believe it was, or at least between here and Bowdon. You came to West Georgia right out of high school, if I remember correctly?
Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:30:18 Yeah. I finished Carrollton High in 1950, and came to West Georgia for two years. At that time it was a junior college, and then I went on to the University of Georgia. Here's an interesting, personal note about that. I was torn at that time between majoring in journalism, and going into the ministry. I had thoughts about becoming a Baptist minister.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:30:45 So, I actually enrolled, or gained admission, to the University of Georgia and to Mercer University. I went to Mercer University, and enrolled, and registered, and I became disillusioned with the place after a day there. So, I decided I wanted to go to the University of Georgia. I was not impressed with their faculty that I had met that were involved in journalism.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:31:17 At Mercer or Georgia?

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:31:17 At Mercer.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:31:18 At Mercer.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:31:18 At Mercer. They had a journalism program there, but it was not much of a program at that time.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:31:23 Yeah.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:31:24 So, what I did was I went to the registrar's office, and gave them some sob story, and got my check back that I had paid for that first quarter of admission. Then, I hired somebody to drive me to Athens, Georgia, paid them ten dollars to drive me to Athens. Took all my little belongings to Athens, and went up there and registered to enter the University of Georgia.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:31:48 But, let me go back before that. This is an interesting story. When I finished high school in 1950, and came to West Georgia that fall I came the first two quarters on what was then known as a rotary scholarship. The Carrollton Rotary Club provided scholarship money, and the total amount that I was awarded was seventy-five dollars. That paid my first two quarters, plus fifty cents.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:32:13 To West Georgia?

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:32:14 To attend West Georgia at that time. But, anyhow, I went on to the University of Georgia, majored in journalism. While I was there I was editor of The Red and Black, the student newspaper at the University of Georgia. One of the persons who was also at the University of Georgia during this time was a guy named Bill
Shipp who later became a columnist for the *Atlanta Constitution*, and a political writer, and still remains a political expert so to speak.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:32:47 The dean, the dean of Georgia political writers, they call him.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:32:51 Right. Shipp, he was a notorious character at that time as he probably is today. But, he had been booted out of Emory University when he came to the University of Georgia. He was editor of the student newspaper, *The Red and Black*, at Georgia. He ran a cartoon on the front page making fun of Roy Harris, who was the big political power in the state at that time over in Augusta. He was the so called guy who broke governors, and all that, broken Georgia politics.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:33:23 But, Bill Shipp ran this cartoon making fun of Roy Harris, so they relieved him, or fired him as editor of *The Red and Black*. I took over as editor the day he was fired, and was editor for ... at that time you only had one quarter as editor, and they rotated it. But, I became editor for that quarter.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:33:45 My managing editor, number two person with me at that time was also from Carrollton, a guy named Alvin Shackleford. And Alvin Shackleford had graduated from Mercer, and then come over to Georgia and was working on his journalism degree. He became the editor of *The Red and Black* after my tenure. He then went on to become a major literary figure in the Southern Baptist denomination, and is today the editor of *Maturity Magazine*, which is a Baptist publication coming out of Nashville. But, Alvin was a good person, a good journalist, and he and I worked together over there at that time.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:34:27 Were you involved in any kind of journalism work at West Georgia when you started there?

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:34:32 Well, I was editor of the student newspaper at West Georgia. But, at the same time I was working on the Carrollton newspaper, and I just didn’t have time to spend much on the student paper here. So, I was elected editor, and did it a few weeks, and then I resigned as editor and turned it over to somebody else. I had to work to make a living, to pay my way through college, and being editor at that time didn’t pay anything. So, I just couldn’t afford to spend the time on it.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:34:59 Well now, what was West Georgia like back then? You just had a front campus, it wasn’t a back campus?
The main part of the campus was the front campus circle, semi-circle that now exists, Front Campus Drive. Behind that were the Gordon Watson Hall, and I guess it's the geography building back there, and the gymnasium, and the tennis courts. There was an old Army barracks over there, and Army barracks on the western side of the campus left over from World War II industries that functioned out here of some sort, and I'm not familiar with that. But, they did exist here, and they were used as barracks.

But, anyhow, the main campus was the front campus. There were all kinds of rules. We only had about four or five hundred students. Women were not allowed to be in a vehicle with a man, and if you went to the movie downtown you couldn't ride in a car, you could ride in a cab if you could afford to do that. Otherwise, you had to walk back and forth to town to the movie.

That's a nice little walk.

It is, it is. Every Tuesday there was a devotional in the gymnasium, and they took attendance records where you had to attend this thing. It was a mandatory attendance thing. You signed a little sheet of paper as you went in.

Also, there was an organization here, and I think this is kind of humorous, but at the time it was not humorous. It was called the VRA, the Voluntary Religious Association. Every student was automatically a member of the Voluntary Religious Association, and it was a pretty active group on campus.

Anyhow, it was that kind of ... In the spring the big event was Dot McNabb, who is a physical education professor and much loved by thousands of students through the years. Dot McNabb produced a dance, a Mayfest, a Maypole program every year in which the co-eds were dressed in colorful pastel dresses, and they danced on the back campus. The townspeople came out to view that, and it was a happy, positive time. Another thing that occurred back then, and continued occurring after I came to work here was something called Parent's Day. That probably was going on when you came here.

Mm-hmm (affirmative), it was.

That was a day in the spring when had awards for scholarship, and other things, and a big assembly, and a major speaker from
outside. The parents of students were invited, and it was a big barbecue served on the back campus.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:37:44 I remember after I came to work here, I came to work here in 1959, but it got to where it was so big, and so many people were coming back to it they were having doubts about whether they could just keep doing it or not. One year we were just about to run out of barbecue. So, we had a professor here named Bob Miller, who was a philosophy professor. You remember Bob Miller, don’t you?

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:38:06 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:38:06 Bob Miller had told me, he bragged to me about speaking to the Villa Rica High School graduation, and he said it was outside, and there was a big storm coming up. He was a minister also, and he said he looked up in the sky, and he said, "Lord, hold everything off for just a few minutes, and let me finish this speech." He said the skies just cleared away, and he went ahead and gave his speech.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:38:30 So, that day at the barbecue I pulled Bob Miller aside, and I said, "Bob, stand over here by the Student Center. We’re about to run out of barbecue, and we need you to create some more barbecue, and buns if we run short."

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:38:44 Like the fishes and loaves there, huh?

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:38:46 Yeah, yeah.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:38:47 Did he produce for you?

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:38:48 No, he didn't cooperate that well. But, we eventually had to discontinue having that occasion, because it was so costly, and got so big.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:38:58 Were the roads paved all the way to Bowdon at that time?

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:39:02 Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. This was mm-hmm (affirmative). But now, I'll tell you another thing about that. Again, this is the late ’50s, and the early ’60s. There was where now is Love Valley was also a duck pond. Was that there when you came here?

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:39:15 Mm-hmm (affirmative), it was.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:39:17 Okay. For Parent's Day every year, Troy Holcomb was the director of landscaping and grounds, and Troy and his personnel
would ... that was the muddiest looking old lake you ever saw, except for Parent's Day. They would put dye in it, and it'd be green. It was a beautiful pond during the week of Parent's Day.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:39:40 A lot of things have changed since I came here. The police force at the time I think had maybe three people on it. The head of it was Dorsey Kidd.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:39:49 Yeah.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:39:51 He was the captain. They called him Captain Kidd.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:39:52 Yeah.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:39:54 His only weapon was a blackjack that he carried.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:39:57 Right.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:39:58 He had a real old bird dog that used to run with him. He'd have to stop, and wait for the dog to catch up if he was in a hurry going somewhere.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:40:07 Yeah.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:40:07 Which really kind of bespoke of the pace of the school.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:40:10 Right.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:40:11 Even as late as the early 1960s. Now, things were changing here though at that time. You had some people that you have mentioned, Woodfin Cole, and a few others. My favorite from the period aside from Ebb Duncan, and people like that, was Henry Lumpkin, who is probably one of the finest men I ever knew.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:40:31 Oh yeah, yeah.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:40:33 He kind of picked up, as I remember, where the Mandeville Mills left off, and began trying to salvage that project, and did salvage it.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:40:42 In fact, he put a business in, an industry, in the old Mandeville Mills building called-

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:40:50 Printed Fabrics.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:40:50 Printed Fabrics.
Dr. Mel Steely: 00:40:51 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:40:52 That became a major industry here for many years, and still functions over there as a matter of fact.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:40:58 Yeah, it wasn't as big as Southwire.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:40:58 No.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:40:58 But, at the time it did save a lot of jobs.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:41:02 That's right.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:41:03 Mr. Lumpkin did quite well for himself, and his family, as well as for the community.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:41:08 Yeah, he was a great leader. He was mayor for a while, and was associated with every positive movement in the community during the years that he was active.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:41:18 That was my impression.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:41:19 I had a great deal of respect for him, and everybody else did too. There were a number of people like that. See, when I was a kid growing up in this community you had maybe a half a dozen people who basically made all to decisions in Carrollton. That was the Root family, the Boykins, the Lawlers, Lawler-Hauser Mill, Tom Lawler, the great former mayor, Dr. Tom Luck, who still has relatives here, and a few others who made the major decisions for the good of the city.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:41:55 Like many other communities through the years, as time went by, the leadership, and the decision making kind of flattened out, and more and more people became involved in it. So, by the time I became mayor in 1979, you had a whole different set of dynamics there as to the decision making process. The public input became important, that people were expressing opinions, and becoming involved in movements, and organizations that helped shape the policies of the community.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:42:26 Well now, at what point did you get interested in politics?

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:42:33 My earliest interest in politics goes way back to, I guess, the ‘40s when I was a small kid. Eugene Talmadge was the governor of Georgia. Talmadge was coming to speak on a Saturday at the old Carrollton City Park.
That would have been in '41 or '42 when he was governor.

Okay. I was just a small kid, but they paid me a quarter that Saturday to hand out leaflets announcing his visit. So, he came, and when he came, he came with an entourage that included several state patrol cars, and flashing lights, and all that. It just impressed the heck out of me that here was this big shot, this governor, and then he got out, and he made a speech. People were yelling, and carrying on. I thought that's not a bad life. So, I got interested in it at that time.

Through the years I didn't have much opportunity to get involved in politics, but I was involved in a lot of other things. But, by working here at the college I was insulated to some extent from being involved in political movements for many years.

Finally, I got interested in running for mayor, because you and others came to me, and said, "We'd like to have you consider doing this." I thought, at the time, there's no way I want to be involved in local government like that, there's a lot of hassle to it. But, I got to thinking about it, and I decided maybe I ought to do that. So, I did in 1979 run for mayor. I was actively and fully involved here at West Georgia at that time, and intervening in the years afterwards.

I talked with Dr. Townsend, the president of the college for whom I worked, and he gave me full permission to go ahead with it. The reason I could do that is that Carrollton has a city government that is based on a city manager running the city, the nuts and bolts of the city, on a day to day basis. The mayor is mainly kind of like a chairman of a board. The mayor and council set the policy, and the city manager and the other professional personnel carry it out. That's still the way it's operated here, and I think it's a wonderful system. It's the only way I could've ever served as mayor.

I was mayor for almost fourteen years. We had a city manager during that period of time named Dudley Crosson, he was city manager for most of those years. He was highly competent, forward looking, crusty sort of a guy that knew his business. A lot of the good things about Carrollton and Carroll County now are due to his vision, and his management of the resources all during those years. Dudley was a good steward of the public welfare.

And also, people like John Robinson, the pharmacist. John was a mayor during many of those crucial years. They developed the
water resources for this area at that time, if they had not had that forward looking vision we would not have adequate water at the time. So, we try to do the same thing when I was mayor. We developed the Sharp's Creek Reservoir, and we need to be doing that now for the future with other water resources. You have to plan yeas ahead to have adequate water.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:45:56 Now John, in my mind, was one of those people that’s representative of the new leadership you were just talking about. It came after the old guys’ families had been here running it.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:46:08 That’s right.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:46:09 I tie that in with the veterans coming back from World War II. John had been a young Marine aviator as I remember. Hundreds of others like him came back all over Georgia. Carl Sanders comes to mind.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:46:22 Right, yeah.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:46:25 They wanted change.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:46:27 Yeah.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:46:27 They wanted to get people involved, and have a good future for their kids. They were determined they were going to have it. They got involved, and began changing things.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:46:34 That’s right. They were active and pro-active. John Robinson was the first mayor that I recall who actively went out, and sought help for the local government, and local community from the state, and federal sources. He, and Dudley, and others who were active at the time got grants for street building, for parks, for water and sewer building. They got an Appalachian Grant to build the infrastructure that enabled us to have the Columbia Drive area where Sony and CBS Records eventually located. A lot of those things were due to their activity during those years, you’re exactly right, of bringing about change in a positive way.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:47:18 Yeah.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:47:18 And growth.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:47:19 Ebb Duncan worked real hard, I remember, for the college when he was in the legislature.
Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:47:23 Right.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:47:25 And, got Governor Sanders to come up with some money, and built the complex where my office is in social sciences over there, and had worked earlier to get it made a four year school.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:47:38 Well, that was an interesting time, because at the time West Georgia ... I think there are certain historical watermarks in West Georgia's history. One of them, of course, is 1932, '33 when it was formed as a junior college in the University System of Georgia.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:47:59 Then, in 1939 the third year, rural teachers were added out here. Then, in 1957 was the year that the approval was given by the Board of Regents to turn this into a four year college. Ebb Duncan was a key factor in that. Irvine S. Ingram was a key factor.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:48:22 I was at that time the news editor. I was fresh out of the Army, and was working at news editor of the Carroll County Georgian when they announced this. I wrote the story about West Georgia being given approval to convert to four year institutional status. That was in 1957.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:48:40 I then went to Atlanta, and stayed for three years. In late '59, I came back to the college, came back to Carrollton, and became affiliated with the college. Those were crucial years. The college at that time was small.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:49:00 I remember the first year I was back here, 1959, Dr. Ingram commissioned a study on the future of the college. A guy came in here, one of these statisticians, and did a pretty thorough study. But, he predicted that if everything went well within ten years ... at that time we had 735 students. They said we could have as many as a thousand students in ten years. Well, in ten years we had three, or four, or five thousand.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:49:29 Yeah.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:49:29 It was just rocking and rolling with students, and with growth. Those were exciting years, which we'll discuss.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:49:41 Also, you mentioned you had served in the Army for a couple of years. You were drafted in?
Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:49:46 I was a draftee, and I served at the tail end of the Korean War. I never went overseas, I was stationed in Seattle, Washington. I've always reported that I fought the battle of Seattle.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:49:56 And, won it.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:49:57 Yeah, and won it.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:49:58 Not a single Korean came ashore.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:49:59 And, got the Good Conduct Medal, and I was the Soldier of the Month at the Seattle Army Terminal for one time. I was also a Military Driver of the Month without a driver's license. So, I had a distinguished military career, but I served my two years. I think it's important, I've always noted that, that I think young people ought to devote two years to their country in some fashion.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:50:50 How much did you make there?

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:50:50 I made a hundred dollars a week. I was drafted into the Army, and made a hundred dollars a month, or ninety dollars a month. I thought this is terrible, here I am dodging bullets on a course, training course, up here in Augusta, Georgia. The summer of 1954, the hottest summer in Georgia history, I took Basic Training over there, because that's not near as bad as a lot of people who gave their lives, and other things in the military. So, I'm certainly not complaining about that. I just think it was not a bad thing for me to serve, and for others to serve a period of time for their country.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:51:28 Now, you spent about three years, as I remember, working for the Atlanta newspapers, actually moved to Atlanta for a while. Tell us about that time.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:51:35 Well, I finished the Army ... I was in the Army '54 to '56, and I came back for six months, about six months, and worked for Stanley Parkman as news editor of the Carroll County Georgian. Then, I had an opportunity to go work on The Atlanta Journal
for Jack Spalding, who was the editor of the Journal at that time. I was the youngest member of the editorial staff they had ever had at that time.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:52:03 My job was to lay out the editorial pages, and edit the columns like Drew Pearson, and Celestine Sibley, and all those people who wrote, Leo Aikman, to make them fit on those two editorial pages. Occasionally, they would let me write an editorial, which is over on the left hand side. As time went on I wrote more and more of those editorials.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:52:25 But, my main job was to edit those columns, and lay out the editorial pages. It was a wonderful time to be in Atlanta. Atlanta was a happy town, not nearly so crowded as it is now. I was single, there were a lot of parties at night there, and it was a wonderful era.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:52:43 You remember Ralph McGill? Did you do any work with him at all?

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:52:46 Yes, indeed. Ralph McGill, and Eugene Patterson. McGill was editor of the Constitution. Of course, I worked for Jack Spalding, who was editor of the Atlanta Journal, but the papers, as you know, were jointly owned by the Cox Enterprises. They were separate newspapers during the week with competition between editorial staffs, and the news staff, and the advertising staff. But, on Sunday, the Atlanta Journal put out the Sunday paper. The editorial policy had to be in agreement with both papers.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:53:18 Well, that was during the years when segregation was coming to an end in the country. The big event of that time was the integration of schools in Little Rock, Arkansas. The federal marshals were sent in by Eisenhower. Ralph McGill was writing columns in the Constitution every day supporting that movement, and the Journal was on the other side of the fence. The Constitution circulation was going down, the Journal circulation was going up. But, they never interfered with McGill, they let him do what he felt like he should do.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:53:56 One of the great experiences I had was writing an editorial for the Sunday paper one time saying that gradually the segregation teeth of the South are being pulled one by one. I wrote this thing, and Jack Spalding, I didn't think he'd pass on it, but he did. He said, "Use that as a lead editorial." Well, on Saturday morning, that paper ... the Sunday editorial section at that time was printed on a Saturday morning. McGill came stomping down the hall, walked in my office, and he had barely
ever spoken to me before that because he was such a big name and a big hero to everybody, but he came in, and I was scared to death. He said, "I'm told that you wrote this editorial in the paper." I said, "Yes sir." He said, "That's a marvelous editorial." He said. So, I was tickled to death that he thought highly of that editorial.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:54:43 But, McGill was a revered character even at that time among newspaper people there. He could sit down at the typewriter, and turn out a really good quality column every day of the week. It was just amazing his reservoir of knowledge. His opinions were solid.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:55:03 Celestine Sibley was another interesting person who was there at the time. And, Leo Aikman, you may not remember Leo Aikman. He was a humor columnist from Marietta. Leo, every time he wrote a column it looked like hen scratching on the paper. He'd type it out, and then he'd change it, and X it out, and do all this stuff, and play around with it. You did good to read it when you got it. We would do that, and we'd give him a hard time about it.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:55:30 Harold Martin, who eventually became I believe the editor of The Saturday Evening Post, no, no, no he didn't. But, he wrote for national magazines. Harold Martin would write his columns out in long hand. So, the type setters, and everybody had to deal with his longhand writing. But, I got insights like that, and acquaintances like that with a lot of people.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:55:54 Eugene Patterson was brought in to the same job I had at one time, and I was promoted. They brought him in, though, to that job just to keep an eye on him. He had been with the Associated Press in London. They brought him into that, and kept him on that a few months, and saw what he could do, then they made him editor of the Atlanta Constitution. So, he was tried out on the job I had to see what he was made out of. Then, they made him editor of the Constitution later on.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:56:20 He must've passed then?

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:56:20 He passed with big time, and he's been a major figure in the journalistic empire of the country. Also, at that time, I'm trying to put all this together. The editor of the Constitution who got kidnapped, who got ...

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:56:40 I know who you're talking about, but I can't remember his name.
Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:56:42 I can't think of his name.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:56:43 Went out to San Francisco for a while.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:56:47 Yeah.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:56:47 And, down to ... no, Patterson went down to Florida.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:56:49 Patterson went to Tampa.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:56:50 St., Tampa, yeah.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:56:51 No, to St. Petersburg.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:56:52 St. Petersburg, yeah.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:56:53 But, Murphy?

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:56:56 That's it, Reg Murphy.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:56:57 Reg Murphy, who was married to a West Georgia college alumna, was kidnapped along about that time. So, those were interesting years.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:57:10 Well, it was interesting times in Georgia all together. That's the period when Marvin Griffin was governor.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:57:18 Yeah, right.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:57:19 And, was not going to let Tech play in the Sugar Bowl, because they had a black player at Pitt, or something like that.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:57:23 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:57:25 Then, Ernest Vandiver came in with his, "No, not one," on integration.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:57:31 Right. And, the Sibley Commission-

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:57:32 That's right.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:57:33 He appointed them, and they changed all that.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:57:35 Yeah.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:57:36 Georgia did a turn around.
Dr. Mel Steely: 00:57:38 He changed his mind on that about the time he made that promise. That's why he put Sibley in there.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:57:44 Yeah.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:57:45 You came back to West Georgia during that period, starting out as a PR man trying to help Dr. Ingram, as I remember.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:57:53 That's correct. Dr. Ingram asked me to come back here, and set up the public relations. He had offered me that job earlier, and I was on the Atlanta Journal. I didn't want to leave up there. Then, the person he had in that job didn't work out. So, he called me, and asked me to do it. I said, "All right, I tell you what. I'll come down there, and stay one year, then I'm going to go back to the Atlanta Journal." Because, I was having a great career there, and enjoying myself.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:58:19 You were not married at the time?

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:58:20 I was single, and it was a good time to be single in Atlanta, but whatever. I came here, and I got that office going, and decided to stay one more year, then another year, and I ended up staying 34 years. But, it was a-

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:58:39 Now, you've had three major jobs here. You ran the PR office for a while. After that you became dean of students, and it may have been something in between there, but dean of students. Then, you became, I don't know what the title was, but it was advisor to the president.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:58:59 Well, let me-

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:59:01 Walk through-

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:59:02 Walk you through some of those years.

Dr. Mel Steely: 00:59:03 Yeah, yeah.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 00:59:05 First, let me tell you about the first few years I was here. The college was very small at the time, it had 735 students, as I've indicated. It was beginning to move though, it was beginning to change and grow. The first year I was here, the first few years I was here, my job was to do ... I recruited students. I went to College Day programs, every College Day program held all over Georgia. I did all the alumni work, the fundraising for scholarships, I was a faculty advisor to twenty-five or thirty students, I was advisor to the student newspaper and the
yearbook, and I put out a weekly faculty memo, and I put out news releases. So, I did all that single handedly, most of that time even without secretarial help for the first few years.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:00:01 Those were fascinating years. I would do College Day programs, and somehow we got the notion going in the state that West Georgia was the place to be as a student. The message was out there. I'd go to these College Day programs, and students would just jam the rooms up for my presentation. These other colleges would be down there, and they'd have three, or four, or five students, or half a room full. They'd be hanging out the windows in my rooms. Those were the glory days when we were growing, and changing.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:00:30 One of the problems we had here at the college was the fact that we were packing students ... at that time we didn't let students live off campus. So, we were packing students in the rooms two, three, and four people in a room. It was just awful. You try to get three or four women into one of these little old dorm rooms, and all their clothes, and everything.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:00:53 One closet.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:00:54 No closets to speak of. It became a political thing. We'd have governors, and others call us up, and say, "Susie Jones from Monticello wants to come to school there. We want y'all to make a place for her." Well, you know, that'd be putting her in front of about three or four hundred other people. We had to fight off that kind of thing, year after year. I dreaded the fall, because that was what we ran into. So, I would field a lot of those calls myself, and had to deal with that.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:01:23 Anyhow, the students came, and there were years when we were growing so fast. One year we added seventy-five new faculty members, brand new faculty members, in one year. But, every two or three years we were doubling in enrollment.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:01:37 Dr. Boyd became president in 19 ... Well, actually, let me go back and say Dr. Ingram was president when I came. I've had the privilege of working with every president the institution has had in a professional way except for Dr. Sethna, and I had retired by the time Dr. Sethna became president.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:01:59 But, with all the others preceding him I worked with them. Mr. Ingram, I worked with him for a year. He retired at the end of that year after forty-one years as president of this institution. He was succeeded by Dr. Row. Dr. Row had been groomed for
that job, and was going to do a beautiful job with it, but he died within six months. So, Dr. Ingram came back to serve as a temporary president.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:02:26 Then, in 1961, Dr. James E. Boyd was named president. He had been here on the original faculty in 1933, and had gone on to Georgia Tech, and was involved there as a scientist and mathematician. Then, he came back here in 1961 to be the president. His years were years of growth and change. He was just a beloved figure to the faculty, and thought so highly of him. He made tremendous improvements in the academic program. But, probably the most notable thing he did was to prepare proposals for new buildings to accommodate the growth of students. A lot of the buildings on the back campus were developed and approved during his tenure as president.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:03:09 He was president ten years, from 1961 to 1971. Those were the big growth years for the institution. The library and other buildings were developed in those years. His presentations to the Board of Regents were so thorough.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:03:26 Well, actually, let me go back and say Dr. Ingram was president when I came. I’ve had the privilege of working with every president the institution has had in a professional way except for Dr. Sethna, and I had retired by the time Dr. Sethna became president.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:03:42 But, with all the others preceding him I worked with them. Mr. Ingram, I worked with him for a year. He retired at the end of that year after forty-one years as president of this institution. He was succeeded by Dr. Row. Dr. Row had been groomed for that job, and was going to do a beautiful job with it, but he died within six months. So, Dr. Ingram came back to serve as a temporary president.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:04:08 Then, in 1961 Dr. James E. Boyd was named president. He had been here on the original faculty in 1933, and had gone on to Georgia Tech, and was involved there as a scientist and mathematician. Then, he came back here in 1961 to be the president. His years were years of growth and change. He was just a beloved figure to the faculty, and thought so highly of him. He made tremendous improvements in the academic program. But, probably the most notable thing he did was to prepare proposals for new buildings to accommodate the growth of students. A lot of the buildings on the back campus were developed and approved during his tenure as president. He was president ten years, from 1961 to 1971. Those were the
big growth years for the institution. The library and other buildings were developed in those years.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:05:04 His presentations to the Board of Regents were so thorough, and his demand on people that worked for him, such as myself and his deans and others, were such that you just had to do good work for him, or you felt embarrassed by it.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:05:22 When he'd go before the Regents there was no way ... they couldn't punch any holes in what he was asking for, or what he was proposing, it was so thoroughly prepared. So, he was, I think, a super great leader in developing the institution to what it is today.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:05:40 It was also during those years though, the late '60s, that things started changing on college campuses across the country. A lot of student unrest developed, society was in a state of upheaval in the late '60s. The Vietnam War was tearing people apart, tearing campuses apart. That all came to rest here in the late '60s. It was along about that time that Dr. John Pershing resigned as dean of students.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:06:21 At that time West Georgia had added a master's degree program, in 1967, I believe. I got involved in that, and got my master's degree in guidance and counseling in 1969. Also, that year I became ... I was asked to take over as dean of students for a year or so until they found somebody to do the job. That ended up being a four year assignment, and it was probably the worst four years in the history of American higher education to be a dean of students. You had all the Vietnam troubles, you had all the drug problems, student unrest. We had riots on the campus, marches on the community. It was a riotous time to be a dean of students. I rarely got a full night's sleep in those four years that I was the dean of students.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:07:16 At that time there was a philosophy called in loco parentis which was in effect. That meant that when the police made an arrest of a person underage they were supposed to call the parent or the guardian of that person. So, every time a student was arrested for drug possession, or DUI, or anything instead of calling the parents, they'd call me. So, I'd get calls every night, sometimes two or three times a night. I would go down, and talk to the students, and bail them out, or whatever. They'd promise me that they'd go to court when their time came, and they would do that.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:07:53 Many of these were so called hippie type students. A lot of them have now ... I see them now, and they are professional
people, executives of insurance companies, and banks, and government officials. They're dressed to the kilt, and it's a totally different impression. A lot of them did, they cleaned up their act the minute they left here, because they knew they had to, to get a suitable job.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:08:22 Yeah, yeah. Some never did. Every once in a while you still hear of a few of them that are out there.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:08:28 Yeah.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:08:28 I remember one old boy named Kent Walton.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:08:30 Yep.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:08:32 He was editor at the local paper.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:08:33 Yeah.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:08:34 Showed up in my office one day, and stuck his head in the door, I said, "What can I do for you Mr. Walton?" He says, "I'm a rose." I said, "You are?" "I'm an American beauty rose." He was high on something. But, he went off, got divorced, and lived in a teepee up there off Long Island somewhere, with a bunch of young girls.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:08:55 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:08:56 Last I heard his ex-wife was telling me he was still up there. He never got out of the '60s, he still thinks in those terms. I think there were a number of them like him. But, most of them, the ones I knew, did straighten up and become-

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:09:15 Yeah.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:09:15 Chesley Guinn is one, became a city manager, I believe.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:09:17 Yeah, that right.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:09:18 And, a bunch of things. We've had a number of people that did quite well.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:09:23 Oh yeah.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:09:23 Randy Evans, Randy never was a hippie.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:09:26 No.
Dr. Mel Steely: 01:09:26 But, there were a lot like him that have gone on to do quite well. That was a rough period for you to be in as dean, and you got out of that fairly quickly, just four years of it. About the same time that Dr. Pafford came, as I remember.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:09:42 Yeah, yeah.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:09:43 In fact, you were there during that transition period weren't you?

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:09:46 That's correct, I was. Let me go back though a minute, and talk about some things that happened during those four years.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:09:53 Okay.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:09:55 Those were years when the college was changing, Dr. Arons came in as head of the psychology department. Dr. Pearl Nix, who ran a traditional psychology department, was dethroned and Dr. Arons was put in.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:10:15 Literally dethroned as I remembered. She didn't find out that she wasn't chairman until she showed up one day, and they told her she was gone.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:10:22 I think that's probably true. Arons came in, and created a whole new whirlwind of academic activity, which caused many of the problems on the campus. But, also put the college on the cutting edge of some of those things that were happening in psychology at the time. We still are feeling ... What is it that follows an earthquake? You have aftershocks.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:10:44 Aftershocks, yeah.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:10:45 I think we still have some aftershocks of that. But, it made for a more interesting place. For example-

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:10:53 Humanistic psychology.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:10:54 Humanistic psychology was what it was.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:10:56 Yeah.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:10:56 We became notorious throughout the country for this. One of the things that came along with that was a farm out near Roopville, in the Roopville area, where one of the professors of psychology had a farm, and a bunch of psych students lived out there. It was a communal living order. They would take their
meals topless, the women would. They'd go pick up the mail topless. You can imagine the ripples that created in the community.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:11:27 It was along about that time that the Manson murders occurred in California. So, people here became very upset that these same types of people, or looking people, were roaming the country-side, and living out there. It caused me a lot of problems, and grief to try to deal with the public on, and explain that away. Or, not explain it away, but try to assure them that that kind of thing wouldn't happen here. There were some weird things that did happen out there that eventually I will reveal.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:12:03 But, not on tape today huh?

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:12:05 But, not on tape today. I've got all that stuff written down. I kept a diary while I was dean of students, and I've got that stuff written down. It's in my bank vault. One of these days I'm going to publish it, and I would reveal some of it. But, let me just illustrate one case without any names.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:12:21 One of the famous places is the old set of apartments back of the college here, which are now ... Back then they were known as Jackson Court. That was a lively place, and during those years the GBI, and state law enforcement officers, would come in and conduct raids of student apartments, and arrest students. One night they came in, and they brought the TV cameras from Atlanta with them.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:12:53 They would set up the cameras out in the parking lot, and then once the cameras were ready, the GBI people would go flying through the doors, kicking the doors in, and arrest the students. That stuff would be on television the next day, or late that night. One time they arrested I think 69 or 79 students in one raid. Do you remember that? You were here.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:13:14 Mm-hmm (affirmative). I do remember that.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:13:16 So, the students were incensed when they saw that on television, all the other students were. So, they started calling the TV stations in Atlanta. Well, one of the TV stations, and I forget which one it was.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:13:34 Channel 5.
Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:13:35 Sent a crew down here to record student reaction the next day. I got a call about noon that said please get down here to the Student Center, they are surrounding that television crew, and rocking their car. So, the students were, that crew was scared to death. They had them down there, and they were rocking the car, and yelling at them, and shouting at them.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:13:59 All the students knew me, and I kind of walked through the crowd, and the crows parted. I told the students, I said, "Look, here's a chance for us to tell our story in a major medium." I said, "Y'all stand aside, and let them interview me." So, they did. I was able to say what I wanted to say, but that night it came out on television, and I looked behind me, and it was the worst looking hippie I think I've ever seen in my life standing back there with a big smile on his face.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:14:24 Another time they had a big raid like that, and the students held a rally in front of the Student Center. They built a wooden platform out there. They stripped down to the waist, and wrote on their chest in lipstick or something, it said kill the pigs. When police cars would drive by they'd throw rocks at them, and all that. It was just a bad scene. It was about four or five o'clock in the afternoon, and about eighty, a hundred students out there.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:14:49 What they did after they had their little rally out in front of the Student Center, they marched in the middle of the street over to Maple Street in the traffic, five o'clock traffic. They marched toward the square, toward the jail, the county jail where all their fellow students were in jail.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:15:07 Dudley Crosson was the city manager, and he wisely asked the police to halt the traffic, and let the students through. I was trying to stop the students, and he was trying to get them to let them through if they wouldn't stop. We cooperated on that. Of course, I was not the mayor in those days. I wouldn't been elected mayor that year for any amount of money. But, anyhow, they did.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:15:28 They went down, and held a rally at the jail, on the front steps of the jail. The jail at that time was in the downtown Carrollton area, it is now out on the edge of the community. But, at that time it was downtown.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:15:39 Down there behind the Methodist church.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:15:40 Behind the Methodist church.
Dr.Mel Steely: 01:15:41 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:15:42 Those were interesting. A few days later the town did a march on the campus led by the Jaycees, and the veterans’ organizations. They came marching out here one afternoon with little children with flags leading the way. They had a platform set up over here by the Humanities Center. The students were lined up, probably a thousand students lined up, on the bank up there. I had got the student government people to form a human chain like this to keep the students back away from the townspeople.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:16:20 The townspeople, they had these little children out there, and then the students were chanting these obscene chants like, "One, two, three, four we don't want your god damn war." It was just a bad, bad scene every which way.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:16:34 Finally, we let the people speak briefly. Then, we told them they had to leave, and they did. But, it was a tense time. You'd have students marching up town passing out Viet Cong flags. People, you can imagine-

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:16:49 Had faculty members that joined them I remember.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:16:51 Oh yeah. We had a faculty meeting, no, it was an event of some sort in the Bonner Lecture Hall. The Vietnam veterans marched in on one side of the room, and Atlanta activists on the other side. They grabbed the microphone, it was just a bad scene. Everybody was trying to have their say.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:17:13 Yeah, it's a rough period. When you got out of that, and stepped into even a more difficult job when President Pafford came ... I think there was a year when you had an acting president, Dr. Walker?

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:17:28 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:17:29 Which would've been what? '72. Then, in the fall of '72 I guess it was, or three, Dr. Pafford came over from Emory or Valdosta or somewhere.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:17:42 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:17:44 He had a fellow by the name of Ford that was his assistant for a while.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:17:49 Yeah.
Dr. Mel Steely: 01:17:49 Then, he went off to be a preacher, or something. You moved up to become the counselor, advisor? What was your title at that time?

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:17:58 That's a good question. Some days it was one thing, and some days it was another.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:18:01 Yeah.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:18:03 The Boyd years ended in 1971. By that time the people in the community, with all this stuff that I've been talking about, they were getting upset with the college. We had very poor relationships. So, Dr. Pafford ... There was turmoil on the campus in those years too. Dr. Walker and Dr. Pershing headed different camps on the campus that had different ideas about ... they were huge arguments over what kind of students ought to be, and what the admission standards ought to be for the college. We had almost get into fist fights in Admissions Committee meetings between the two of them. Well, not fist fights, but they were just vicious disagreements on what the standards should be. That's a good philosophical argument.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:18:53 Dr. Walker tended to want to let people in on an easier basis. Dr. Pershing, and others on the faculty and staff, wanted to raise the admission standards. It became a real vocal argument. A lot of times I would have to try to make peace with that. Then, the Regents decided they wanted to change all that, and send a president in here who would make peace with the community, and bring peace on the campus.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:19:24 So, after long deliberations, and Dr. George Simpson was the chancellor at the time, and we had a huge faculty community committee to select a president. Dr. Pafford was the ultimate choice, because he was a native Georgian, he was an established academic with an English degree, profession. He was a personable guy with a personable wife, and they felt like he could bring about improvement, and he did. To my way of thinking, that's a major accomplishment of Dr. Pafford, was the healing of the rift between the community and the campus, or the town and the gown.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:20:09 Yeah.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:20:10 He was accepted among all the key people in the town. He had a better acceptance in the community than probably he did here on campus, because he tried to bring things to pass here
on campus in a faster way, I think, than the faculty at times wanted to see it happen.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:20:32 One of the things was he felt like you could change student behavior quicker than it really was possible to do. He was appalled, and rightfully so, over student language, student vulgarisms, and all, or anybody's vulgarisms. Yet, trying to change that, and I was the dean of students at the time, was very difficult to do.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:20:58 So, anyhow, after he came I started working on my doctorate. Dr. Don Adams became the dean of students, he succeeded me. I remember the meeting at which Dr. Pafford ... you know, there's always been a tension between those with PhDs, and those with education doctorates. Dr. Pafford announced that ... I think Don Adams had an education degree. He said that he was going to succeed me as dean of students, and I forgot ... anyhow, he made a comment that Dr. Adams has got a doctorate, such as it is.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:21:50 The same degree that Pershing had had actually.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:21:52 Yeah.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:21:53 Both of them had EdDs.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:21:53 Right.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:21:55 Yeah, Adams I remember was a friend of mine, he was in my Sunday School class. He took umbrage at that.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:22:00 Yeah, yeah.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:22:02 He had been to Indiana University, Indiana. What was his name? The boy that ran the off campus program for a while, extension program, what was his name? He does financial advising.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:22:16 Paul Smith?

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:22:17 No.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:22:17 No.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:22:20 He and Adams came about the same time. Both of them wanted to be college president, that was the big thing with them. I remember they were trying to move up to that. How did you
end up going from being a student dean to being an advisor for the president?

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:22:43 What my whole guiding philosophy in working here through the years, I never became a member of any clique, or group. I remember Dr. John Martin was the vice president and dean for a long time.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:22:56 And, a great man.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:22:57 And, did a wonderful job, and others. You'd have certain friends of these people, as is now the case, become kind of an in-group. They used to have a brown paper sack lunch group that would meet together. I never met with those people. I just did my job.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:23:12 One of the interesting things that I've laughed about through the years is the people on the campus out here viewed me as a Carrollton guy, and the people in Carrollton viewed me as a college person. So, I've always kind of been in a never-never land. I've cultivated that, there's an advantage to that.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:23:29 I don't want to be identified with any particular group necessarily. I want to be my own identity. I argue when somebody goes, and quotes me in something with the newspaper, or whatever. I always say, "Let me be my own spokesperson. I'll speak for myself. I don't want you saying 'Tracy Stallings said,'" so and so and so and so. If I want to say that I'll say it myself.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:23:55 One of the things I did in the process of that was gain the confidence of every president I think that we had that I worked with. I would try to give them good advice on issues, and I would not try to force that advice on them. I didn't give advice unless it was asked for. There are certain things that coming from an outside world background, I was never an academic, never accepted as an academic, and never really pushed to be an academic. I got a PhD at Georgia State, and they told me that I wouldn't be given that degree, awarded that degree, unless I taught some. They found out I had never taught. So, I came back here, and talked to somebody, and let me teach a couple courses of journalism, which I did. That's my teaching career is a couple of courses. I know I'm not a teacher.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:24:48 That's been a handicap in a way. I would never advise anybody to work on a college campus unless they're in the academic field. You are artificially limited in what you can become, and do. You can't hit the top. Very few presidents go through
becoming as deans of students, or director of admissions, or director of financial aid, or director of development, or anything else. You need to come through the academic ranks if you're going to be a president. I would not advise anybody to get into any field like that unless you just don't want to go to the top. But, whatever, that's another subject.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:25:24 What was your roughest time with Dr. Townsend?

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:25:29 Well, Townsend and I ... Again, when he came on board one of the key factors about this institution is that we've always had the kinds of presidents we needed at the particular era in which they were president. We had Boyd in the growing years, we had Ingram in the founding years, we had Pafford in the years when we needed to come together as an institution and a community.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:26:02 Then, things got so to the point that the laissez-faire management system, and the humanistic trends through the years, and all that kind of came together. It was kind of an unspoken, a tacit feeling on campus, and in the community, and in the state that we needed strong management type leadership for the institution. It just amazed me, because a faculty would come together, and want a Maurice Townsend who was an authoritative leader, stern, task master, but that was what happened. They wanted somebody like that to come in, and take over, and he did.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:26:47 He established his authority first hand. It doesn't take much. I've observed leadership through the years, and little things become big symbols. Townsend came to this campus, and went over to look at the president's home. Bob Townley took him on a tour of the home. You heard this story?

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:27:05 No.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:27:08 Townley, Bob Townley, was telling Dr. Townsend we're going to paint this room green, and this one yellow, and we're going to have this all fixed up for you by the time you, and Mrs. Townsend, and your family get here. Others were walking along with them, and Townsend said, "Mr. Townley I want you to know you will do what I ask you to do with these colors, and with this painting, and with this house. I'm the president here." Well, Townley liked that kind of authority, but that word got around that he's going to be in charge. And, he was in charge.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:27:40 It was amazing to me how Townsend could ... a faculty member or staff member who was being fired by his or her department
head would appeal that decision, and come to see Townsend, and go into his office in a fit of anger, and come out of there with their head held high, and still without a job, but feeling good about it.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:28:06 I used to tell Townsend, I said, "I don't know how you do it." He didn't talk gentle to them, he said that he told it like it was, and they respected him for it. So, he was able to do that. I think he was ... Some people were afraid of him, I never was. I didn't have that much to lose, and I've never been afraid of any president. I tried to work with them, and cooperate with them. I would also speak plainly to them in private, I never did that in public. But, I would speak plainly in private. If they didn't agree with my advice then I went ahead, and went along with whatever they said. But, most of the time I you're honest with people, and if you've got good judgment they'll accept that judgment.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:28:49 A good leader, a good leader has to have people in whom he can depend, and trust. He needs to have people that are smarter than he or she is in the fields that they're going to be responsible for, because they'll make you look good. Townsend recognized that.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:29:08 One of the strengths he had was that he realized the tremendous importance of public relations, and he also realized that he was personally not good with that. But, he said, "This is your job, and you do that. I'm counting on you to do it, and do it well. I'll judge you by how good of job you do, because I know it's important, and I want it done." But, he was not a Pafford that would go out here, and hang out at the country club, or be one of the boys in the community.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:29:39 True.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:29:40 But, he knew that. He didn't try to be something he was not. Therefore, a lot of people in the community ... I remember somebody wanted a road built, or something by the campus, or something, and he just said, "Absolutely not." Well, it adversely affected that person's business, but that person said, "I respect that. He didn't hide behind anything, he just told me what he thought about it, and that was it." So, he had a way of doing that. He and I, we're different kinds of people, we're different kinds of people all those years, but we were great friends, and great professional associates.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:30:15 I thought a lot of him, I really did. You could go to him, and get a straight answer.
Dr. Mel Steely: 01:30:23 Yeah, yeah.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:30:23 Some of the others you couldn't do that with. But, with him, you always knew exactly what was going to happen.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:30:27 Yeah.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:30:29 He reminded me of another great authoritarian of the time, Harry Duncan.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:30:33 That's true.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:30:34 Who was sole commissioner of Carroll County for years.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:30:37 Yeah, yeah.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:30:37 He was that way. He would tell you real quick, "No, I'm not going to build that road."

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:30:40 Right.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:30:41 "Don't ask me again." People went out, not angry with him, they didn't like it but they understood it.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:30:49 That's right.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:30:49 That was the end of it, and they didn't worry about no more. He was coming along at the same time Townsend, even before Townsend, and was part of the group that helped build the county, and make it so strong.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:31:03 Oh yeah, he definitely was.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:31:06 Ebb Duncan, and Wayne Garner, Charlie Thomas, that whole series of political leaders that came about. Garner was probably the most improbable of the bunch.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:31:18 I remember Garner, you probably do too, when he first ran for the State Senate.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:31:25 I do.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:31:25 He came out here.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:31:27 [crosstalk 01:31:27] a little money for the boy.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:31:27 All right.
Dr. Mel Steely: 01:31:28 And, he was, he was just a boy at that time, he was a kid.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:31:30 He came out here over in the Bonner Lecture Hall at a panel discussion one day with Tom Glanton. Maybe you were there?

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:31:39 He was running against Tom.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:31:40 Yeah. It was a faculty gathering, and Garner stumbled, and bumbled around, and didn't know kind of what he was talking about. Glanton was smooth, and slick. But, you know, it started catching on. He was seen as a person who was serious, and sincere, and would learn, and he did.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:32:03 Ultimately, he became slicker than anybody. But, Garner is also a great char ... he's a good administrator. He became a key figure in the prison system while he was serving in the Senate as chairman of the prisons committee, or the corrections committee, or whatever. Then, he became, of course, the head of the system, and did a great job in managing it although it was a controversial job at times.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:32:28 It was.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:32:28 He knew what he wanted to do, he was doing what the people wanted done, and that was the result.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:32:34 Well, he trained under one of the best, the old silver fox himself, Culver Kidd.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:32:38 Yeah.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:32:39 Culver and Garner took to each other. Cussed each other roundly, but Culver looked on Garner almost like a son.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:32:48 Yeah.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:32:50 And, really did help him out a good bit. Garner followed a lot of Culver's lead, and turned out to be a first string senator.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:32:58 Well, one of the things about Garner is that he has this personality that everybody likes him, if you've been around him five minutes you consider him your friend. I've walked with him through the halls of the Capitol, and office buildings, state office buildings over there, and if he doesn't go in an office the secretaries, and the managers, and others will run out of those offices if they see him, and speak. Everybody know him, everybody likes him.
Dr. Mel Steely: 01:33:19  Yep.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:33:20  He became an effective figure there.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:33:24  It was an amazing thing to me playing with politics. I started that very early here working with Ebb Duncan, and some of those boys way back in '70 I guess. It was '68 or '70, or earlier. I look at the people that support you in your mayor's races, and your house races, and people that support Garner and the people that support Newt Gingrich, three very different people, and yet they're all the same people.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:33:53  Yeah.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:33:54  Republicans vote for you and Garner, and Democrats voted for Gingrich.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:33:58  Yeah.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:34:00  You wonder what it is about this group that pulls the same kind of people together.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:34:06  Well, I can't speak for them.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:34:10  You must've thought about that.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:34:11  I speak for myself, and say I've always been a centrist sort of a person. There's an old saying, it's not a saying it's a truism, that if you're in public office your future is determined by the bulk of the people in the middle who vote for you. It's not determined by the extremes. If you're talking about the bell curve, those are the people in the middle who make the big determination.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:34:47  The people out here on the fringes of the left, and the right, they make a lot of noise. But, they don't always, or very rarely, ever determine major decision. You live or die off the central tendencies of public opinion.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:35:07  I always have said this, there's a common sense answer to nearly every problem. If you try to get that common sense answer then you're going to be successful, and you'll be an effective leader. In the legislature, I've been there three terms now, and I've discovered just exactly what you're talking about. There are Republican and Democratic members of the legislature whose voting habits, and opinions about things there's not a tenths of a degree difference in them. Yet, then there are others that there's a major difference.
But, we've often talked about forming a new party, a common sense party, which a lot of people, republicans and democrats who traditionally vote alike on most issues would come together. We could be an effective group if we could do that.

But, it would go against the two party system, and it won't happen. A lot of us are very similar in our thoughts. These are the people who I think who become effective leaders.

Well now, you started in politics ... of course you stayed out of it a good while, because you were at the college, and it wasn't seemly to get involved in it. But then, in the late '70s you did get involved as mayor.

People in the community, myself included, came to you and tried to talk you into it, and we were successful.

Yeah.

Right.

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

I guess you've served longer than anybody else. I don't know of anybody that was longer as a mayor than you were.

That's right. I've looked up the history of the mayorships in Carrollton, and I had a longer tenure than anybody else. I served for nearly fourteen years. I left the mayorship in order to run for the State Senate in 1993. That was not a successful run. But, in 1994 I ran for the House, and was elected to the House of Representatives.

Well now, tell me about being mayor. You've described before the process in the sense that it's a city manager operation, and you meet and give broad guidance. I remember your friend Dudley Crosson, my friend Dudley Crosson, talking about one of our previous mayors that also had worked out here at the college, Ted Hirsch.

He said the secret to keeping Mayor Hirsch happy was to be sure that the road was paved between his house, and the courthouse. He rode the same way every day, and long as you didn't have any problem on that street he was a happy man.
Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:37:29 Yeah.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:37:30 That's all you had to do. He said not all mayors are like that. Some of them want to do a lot of other things. When you got involved did you have an agenda as such? Or, did you just go in, and say I'm going to deal with the problems as they come?

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:37:45 I didn't have an agenda except to try to do a good job, and make things better in the community. I could tell when I became mayor ... In the early days when I was mayor every year a big event was to go to the meeting of the National League of Cities in Washington D.C., because at that time it was federal revenue sharing days. Communities got a lot of money from the federal government.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:38:06 So, we all went up there, and wined and dined the members of the Senate and House, and the people who dealt with that money. I could tell Dudley Crosson was ... I miss Dudley. Dudley died a few years ago, but he was a great friend, and a great worker. I could tell the first time I went up there, I had traveled before, I had been around, and Dudley tried to look after all of us like we were just little teenagers, or something. He made all the arrangements, but then he discovered we could kind of fend for ourselves. It amused me that he had looked after people through the years.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:38:47 We had a good system, and we got along well. One of the things that made that work was Dudley was a plain spoken, gruff talking person at times. A lot of times he'd call me up, and say, "Mayor," he said, "So and so is going to come see you." and he said, "He's madder than hell." Said, "He wants us to do so and such, and we can't do that." Well, when so and so would come to see me he'd just be nice as everything, because Dudley had already taken the starch out him. They had a big cuss fight, and Dudley had taken the starch out of him. I'd call Dudley up, and I'd say, "Dudley, that fellow, he's pretty nice. I don't know what you're talking about." But Dudley, we had a good guy bad guy thing. I was the good guy, and Dudley did the dirty work, and the tough work, but it worked out well. We had a good system, we respected each other.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:39:41 I tried to get the decisions made as to the big picture, and then let Dudley and his people carry it out. I didn't go down there, and try to run the police. I don't know how to run a police department, or a fire department. I don't want to know, but I want to have somebody working for me as a mayor who does know, and who is a professional at it. I don't think nowadays all these operations are so specialized, even running a water
system, or a sewer system, or anything else, it's got to be done by people that know what they're doing. I think city managers ought to have at least a bachelor's degree in political science, or management, and preferably a master's degree public administration, or something like that to know what they're doing, and have a period of internship.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:40:27 That's one of the things I insist on. I try to professionalize not only city government, but state government. We need professional people serving in all these capacities. Dudley and I worked together well. I didn't try to go down and say we need to put this traffic light here, and this there. But, when I got feedback from the community, every time I got a call from somebody, Dudley would get a call from me. I'd say I want to get back to this person by bedtime tonight, or first thing in the morning with an answer, or a response to the question, or request, or the plea.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:41:04 You didn't tell him what it had to be, but he had to at least respond.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:41:06 No. I said you respond, or let me respond, but let me know what you do if you respond. So, he would keep me informed. Danny Mabry, Danny was Dudley's assistant in all of those years. He was a very effective person. They would brief me on problems that came up.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:41:25 One of the things I had said is I don't want to look dumb on a major issue with the public. I want you to brief me, and keep me informed about good, and bad things that are happening. I don't want to be blindsided by problems that crop up, and I appear shocked by it. So, they did that, that's the way they operated, and it just worked well. It was a system in which somebody in a profession such as I was in could serve as mayor without having to spend all your time doing that.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:41:55 Mm-hmm (affirmative). It enabled an amateur in other words to come work at it.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:42:01 Right, yeah.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:42:03 Where if you had to actually run the city, it would have been out of your league on that one.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:42:06 Well, that's true. I've seen cases where mayors got elected, and took over, and made major changes to start with, and just was disastrous, because they didn't know what they were doing.
Dr. Mel Steely: 01:42:17 Well, you stayed in long enough to watch people come and go around the state. You were, if I remember correctly, the president of, what'd they call it, the State Mayor's Association?

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:42:27 The Georgia Municipal Association.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:42:29 Yeah.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:42:29 I was president of that, I was active in a lot of state organizations. The Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, and many others. I worked with Governor Zell Miller, I knew Zell Miller back in the early '60s. When I was traveling the state recruiting students for West Georgia, he was traveling the state recruiting students for Young Harris. So, I knew him all these years. So, when I got to Atlanta, it was nothing. I didn't have the learning curve that some people probably had in trying to find your way around the Capitol, and all that sort of thing.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:43:04 Being mayor of a town the size of Carrollton is pretty good training ground for state representative or state senator, isn't it?

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:43:12 Well, it is. Especially in those years of the '80s, when you had so many things going on. You had a lot of involvement of local government with state, and federal government during those years. So, you had a lot of contacts not only with state officials, but with federal officials. I dealt with a lot of that, and that made it more ... that was very helpful, good training to become a member of the legislature.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:43:39 Did you find campaigning for mayor to be difficult?

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:43:43 Campaigning for mayor spoiled me. The first time we had a campaign I ran against Vince Cashen, who was mayor at the time. Bill Doxey, Dr. Bill Doxey, was a professor of English here at the college, university. He ran on a no-growth, no-progress platform. There was the three of us. We had some wonderful debates at civic clubs, which Doxey was just putting this all on. I was kind of trying to point the direction I would go. I'm not sure Mayor Cashen knew the whole scene there. But, he wanted to continue to be mayor, and he since has died, of course, but I think he did a great job while he was in there.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:44:27 Anyhow, I won that election by ... got 70-something percent of the vote. I went home that night, and I told ... At that time they counted the ballots over in the old gymnasium by hand. It was real sad that Vince Cashen thought he was going to win. I went
home that night, and I told my wife Shirley, I said, "Shirley, that was real sad." I said, "Vince thought he was going to win that election, and he is just devastated." I said, "I won it without a runoff." She said, "Well, you better enjoy it, because this is the most popular you will ever be." You know, after you make decisions you always make people unhappy when you make a decision one way or the other on zoning cases, or any others. You gradually lose voters.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:45:13 I don't think that's necessarily the case. I think people generally respect you if you make a decision based on what you think is really right, whether it agrees with their position or not. I've had that experience.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:45:25 You went on to be re-elected three more times.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:45:27 Yeah. That's why I'm saying spoil me, because I was elected three more times, and nobody ever ran against me. I thought this election business is pretty simple. But, then I ran for the general assembly, and I found out-

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:45:39 Different world. Tell me about that race. First, why did you decide to do that? You had a good thing going there with mayor, but you had done about all you wanted to do hadn't you?

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:45:47 Yeah. I was getting bored with being mayor. Wayne Garner resigned as a state senator, and it called a special election. That was a tremendous learning experience. Ran against a guy named Perry McGuire from Douglas County. He was a product of the Christian right wing, and the way out people directed his campaign. He was in a whole different world out there. But, the bottom line is that Douglas County had not had that position. Wayne Garner had been senator from Carroll County, but it covered two counties, the district did.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:46:34 Right.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:46:35 Excuse me.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:46:36 And, Ebb Duncan before him.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:46:38 And, Ebb Duncan. So, that position had always been in Carroll County. Here Douglas County thought they had an opportunity to get it. So, they voted for this guy willy-nilly, whatever he was they were going to put that in Douglas County. So, I didn't carry enough oats in Douglas County to overcome, I carried Carroll
But, let me tell you why I lost. One of the reasons was that the Christian Coalition, and Perry McGuire put out a false leaflet on the Sunday morning prior to the election on Tuesday. They put this thing in a lot of churches, and all. It was a checklist showing my positions, allegedly. It said I was in favor of abortion, I was in favor of changing the state flag, and that I was in favor of gun control. Well, none of those was true in the extent that they said. That didn't matter, and it was too late for me to respond, and straighten the record out. So, I lost by four hundred votes.

Now, if that hadn't happened I think I would've won. But, I went to some of those people that put that material out after the election, and I said, "Where did you get this idea?" I said, "None of this is true." I said, "This is dishonest." They said, "Oh no, this is strategy." I said, "You folks are reading a different Bible than I read. To me this is dishonest." So, since then I've never had any respect for the Christian Coalition, its leaders.

Who did you talk to there?

Huh?

Who told you it was strategy?

A local Baptist minister who is still pastor of the living something church between here and Bowdon. They said this is just strategy.

But, they knowingly said something that was wrong.

Yeah. They said, "It doesn't matter if it's not true, we just want to have our way." Well, there are a lot of people ... The Christian Coalition has been discredited since then, but a lot of its leaders at the time were cynical, and used a lot of their members. A lot of their members were really good, fine, wonderful people that are friends of mine, and I have great respect for them. But, they didn't have any voice in what the leaders did with some of their methods of winning elections. Anyhow, I dealt with that.

You learned a lot in that time, didn't you?

Yeah, that taught me a lesson. The lesson is, when somebody attacks you don't take it for granted that ... well, I back off from
that a little bit. I used to say you don't answer these things, but you really have to. You have to answer in a way.

My last opponent, a guy named Mark Stevens, put out a bunch of trash on the weekend of the election. They all tend to do this. I thing they must have consultants in Atlanta for the party of which I'm not a member that some of my people have latched onto. They do this, they did it with my son down in Newnan. They put out all this trash on the weekend before the elections, and you can't respond to it. I just think people are catching onto that, I think they are seeing that for what it is. I don't think it's going to be nearly as effective in the future.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:50:02 You ran another election for House seat a year later, and won that one.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:50:07 Right.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:50:08 Tell me about that race.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:50:09 Well, that was against a guy named Ron Dollar, who is a respectable person, and he ran a good race, again down to the very end. He put out a little piece on the end, but it didn't ... By that time I had done enough advertising, and personal appearances, and all that in the county knew me basically, and knew what I stood for. I won that election. Then, the next time I ran, I ran unopposed. The last time this guy ran against me, and then we have another election next year. I don't know what will happen then.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:50:42 What does it cost to run a race now for House?

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:50:44 It varies from county to county. There's a lot of differences. A lot of people who have been in the legislature for twenty years, or fifteen, or whatever, even if they've got opposition they don't spend much money. But, in this county it's very expensive, because you got a lot of news media, you've got cable television, you got signs. Signs are terribly expensive nowadays.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:51:07 So, if you've got opposition in this county to run a decent race for the legislature, for the House, and you figure my district there are two House members from Carroll County. Jack West and me, and we divide the county up. But, it takes about twenty, twenty-five thousand dollars to run a race, it did last time. It'll probably go up next time. If you're running for the Senate, a Senate race ... When I ran for the Senate in 1993 I spent $52,000 in that race, and lost.
Dr. Mel Steely: 01:51:42 What's the pay for a senator?

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:51:44 It's $11,000 a year. $11,000 a year. I often wonder why during one of the parades this summer, I was walking up a hill in a parade, and sweating, and hot, and Jack West was walking up on the other side. I said, "Jack, tell me why I'm doing this at age 65 for a job that pays $11,000 a year?" He said, "Because you're nuts." I said, "Well, you really got to want to serve." But, people contribute to campaigns, and that makes it possible to do.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:52:18 What we need to do is to wrap this one up. Our tape's about to run out. We're going to do us another tape, if I can get you for another hour, and just talk about what happened when you got to Atlanta. How the House operates.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:52:37 Okay, yeah.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:52:37 Who those people are like, go back a little bit, look at the various governors.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:52:40 Good.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:52:41 So, we got into more of the Carrollton thing than I thought we would.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:52:47 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:52:47 But, I'm glad we did.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:52:49 Yeah.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:52:49 That'll serve as a center piece for this one.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:52:51 All right.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:52:52 So, let me thank you very much for your time this time.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:52:54 All right.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:52:54 Then, we'll set a date, and do another hour just strictly on House of Representatives.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:53:00 Okay.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:53:00 And, Atlanta politics.
Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:53:01 I look forward to that. I thank you for your patience in listening to all this, and for doing it.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:53:04 Oh, my pleasure. I've enjoyed it.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:53:05 I think it's a valuable service to do some of these other, not me, but I think this is a great thing to be doing, and I'd be happy to work with you anytime we can put it together.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:53:14 All right, well we'll schedule another one.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:53:15 Okay.

Dr. Mel Steely: 01:53:15 Thank you, Tracy.

Dr. Tracy Stallings: 01:53:16 All right.